The Assignment

To prepare an Urban Renewal Assessment and Develop a Vision and Action Steps for the Gateway Corridor Project

Public Process

Planning Workshop on April 28

Open House on April 29

Presentation April 30

Presentation Agenda

Workshop Steps
Marketing Considerations
The Vision
Transportation – The Complete Street
Urban Renewal Eligibility
Where Do We Go From Here?

Comments and Questions

Workshop Steps

















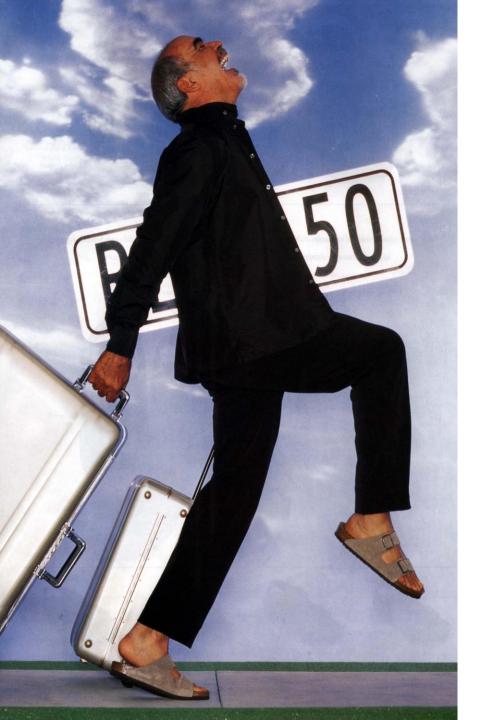






Market Considerations

The Demographic Convergence

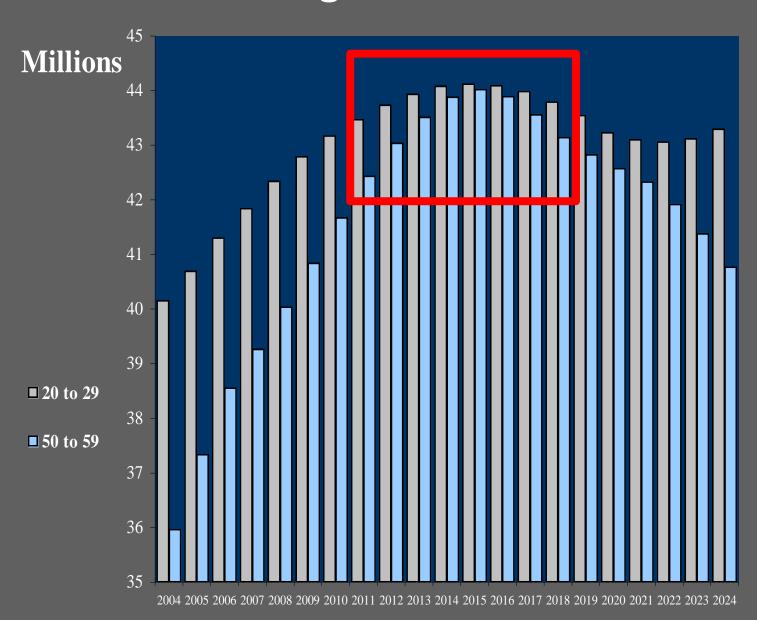


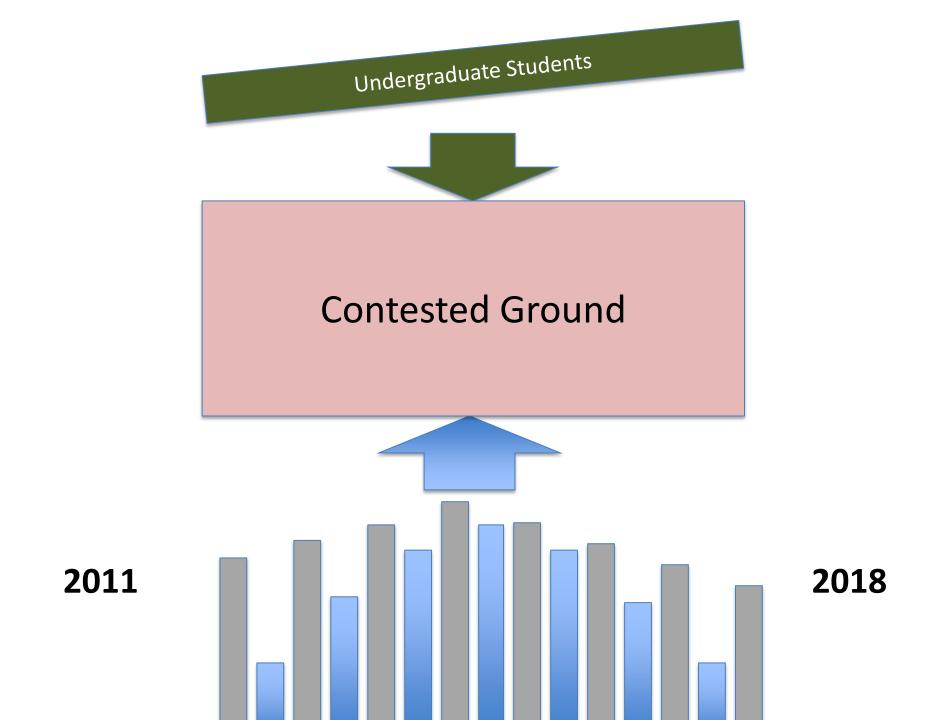
The Baby Boom 82 Million 1946-1964

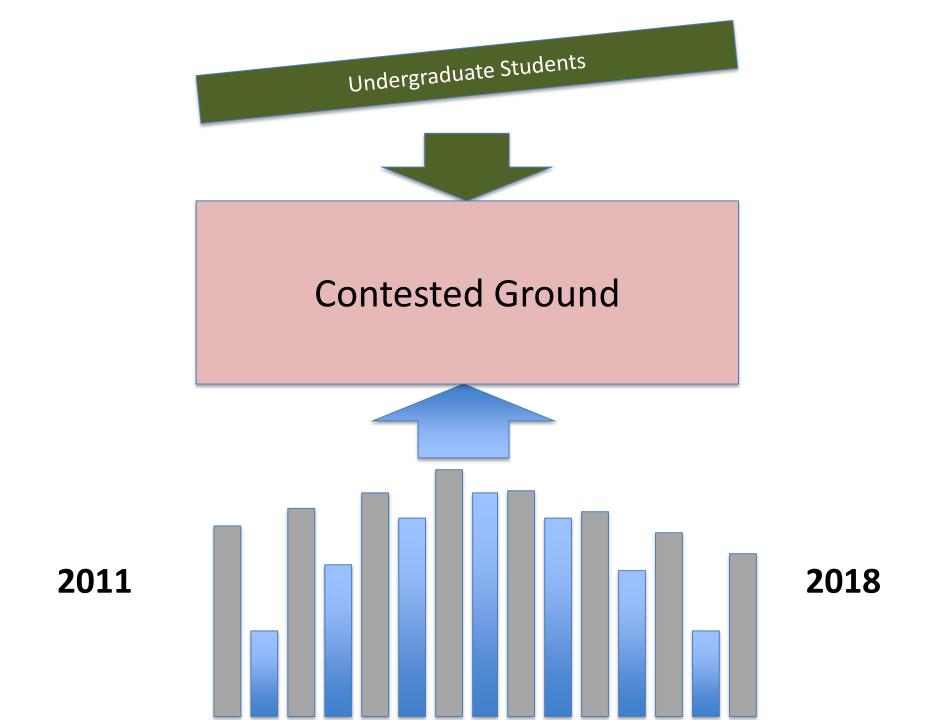


The Millennials 78 Million 1977-1996

Convergence: 2004 to 2024







We recommend a market analysis that looks into:

Migration and Mobility Analysis

Lifestyle and Housing Preferences

Consumer/Market Surveys

A Place to Retire

CNN Money.com 1

25 Best Places to Retire

Your post-work years are a time to improve your golf game, take up a new hobby, or just enjoy a well-deserved break. In these great college towns, you can expand your intellectual horizons too.

21. Amherst Northampton, MA



Great Places to Retire

From golf-intensive Prescott to intellectual Amherst, one may be just the town for you.

Two Questions

Will these market demographics help mitigate the issues faced by Gateway neighborhoods?

Is Amherst ready?

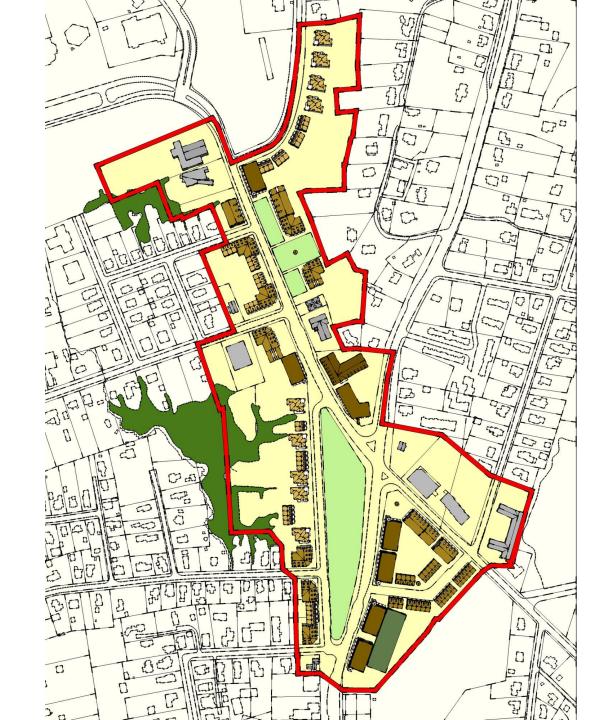
The Vision

Three Character Areas

The Town Center Expansion

The Gateway

The Gateway Neighborhood



Town Center Expansion

Both sides of Kendrick Park

The East Side – a completion of the existing business district

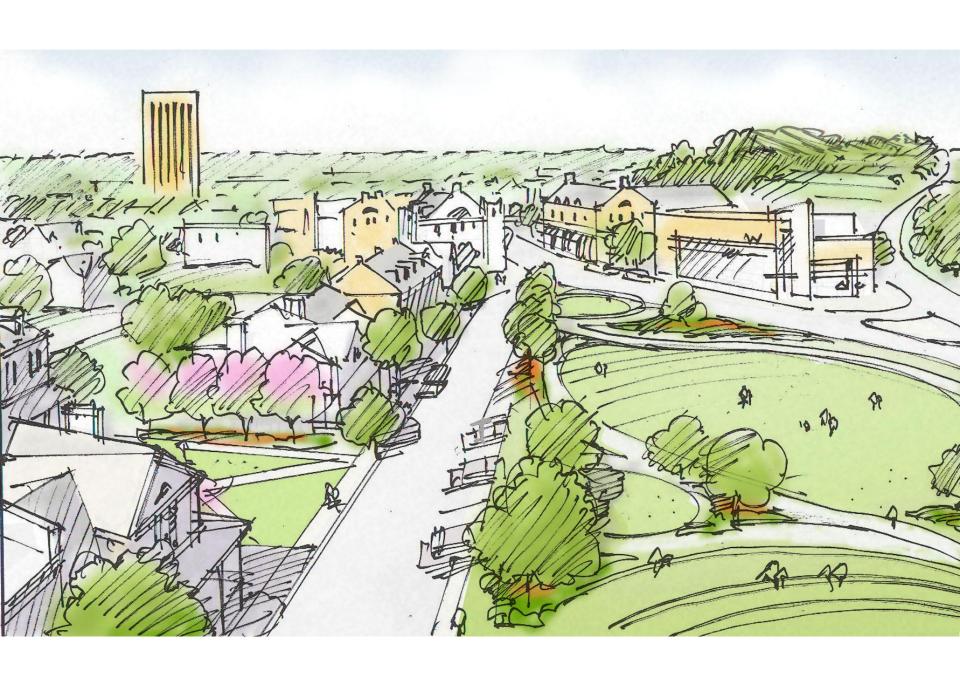
The West Side – a predominately residential buffer for the neighborhoods to the west

Town Center Expansion

Can use four mixed existing residential/commercial zoning designations

Development will be market driven both on the residential and commercial sides





The Gateway

The hinge between the Town Center, the new Gateway Neighborhood and the University of Massachusetts

A strong visual statement

Has uses that serve both the new residents to the south and north





The Gateway Neighborhood

Predominately residential

Mixed use and flex buildings to be responsive to changes in the market

Designed for an empty nester and first time buyers market

Built around a "new green"

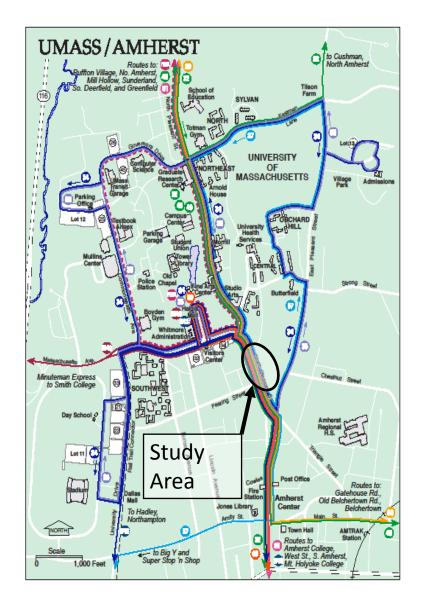




Transportation – The Complete Street

Transit Access

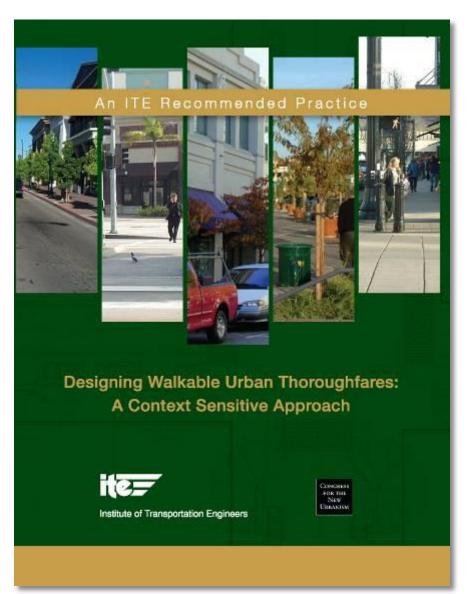




Complete Streets

Encourage:

- 25 mph Speeds
- Narrow Lanes (10')
- Bike & Pedestrian Facilities
- On Street Parking
- Street Trees/Furniture
- Context Sensitivity







- Are balanced for all users
- Provide seamless integration among transportation modes
- Are transit ready

Preliminary Assessment for Urban Renewal Eligibility

Karen M. Cullen, AICP

What we were asked to do

Assess the study area for a <u>preliminary</u>
 determination as to whether the area or
 a portion thereof would be eligible for
 designation as an Urban Renewal Area.



Methodology

- ☐ Field Visits in March and April
- **□**GIS Data
- ☐ Assessor Data
- ☐ Aerial Imagery (orthophoto and oblique)
- ☐ MGL ch. 121B Definitions







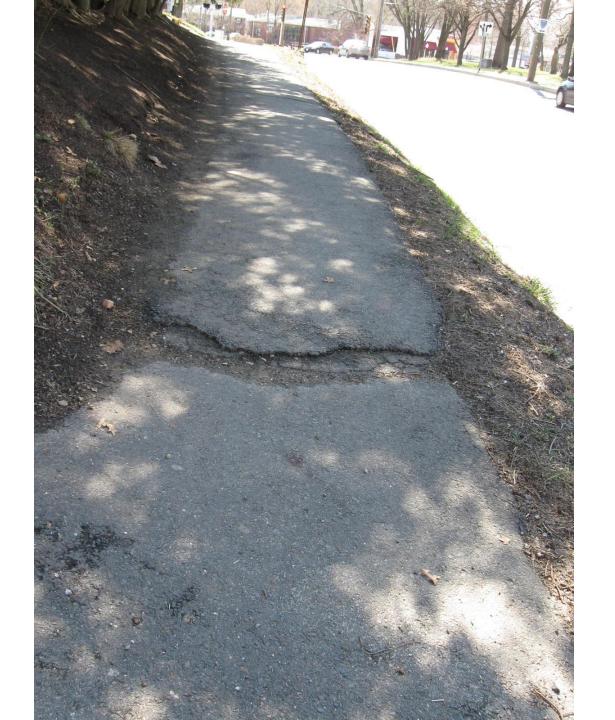




Urban Renewal Designation

- Blighted Open Area
 - Only applies to vacant areas; not the case here.
- Decadent Area defined in state law as
 - Area which is detrimental to safety, health, morals, welfare, or sound growth of a community because of the existence of buildings which are out of repair...
 - Improbable that the area will be redeveloped by the ordinary operations of private enterprise.
- Substandard Area
 - Residential area where dilapidation, overcrowding, etc. are detrimental to safety, health, or morals.







2 **UMass Campus** 14 32 40 16 27 70 54 8 28 2 19

Existing Occupancy

Legend

Study Area
Occupancy

Single Family

Duplex

Apartments

Student Housing

Mixed

Motel

Office

Religious

Utility

Parking

Vacant

Number in parcel = Estimated Number of Residents Total for Area = 531



Existing Conditions – Infrastructure

Legend

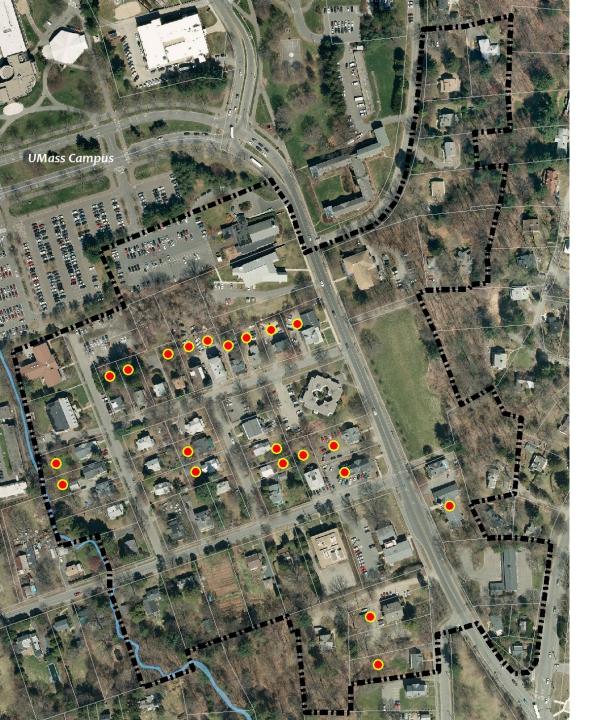
Study Area
Sidewalk Condition

Good

____ Moderate

Poor

The shaded area meets the definition under MGL ch. 121B for Urban Renewal Area eligibility.



Parcels with a red dot are those exhibiting decadent conditions as defined in ch. 121B. This includes:

- ☐Buildings needing repair
- □ Diversity of ownership
- ☐ Irregular lot sizes



Legend

URA Eligibility

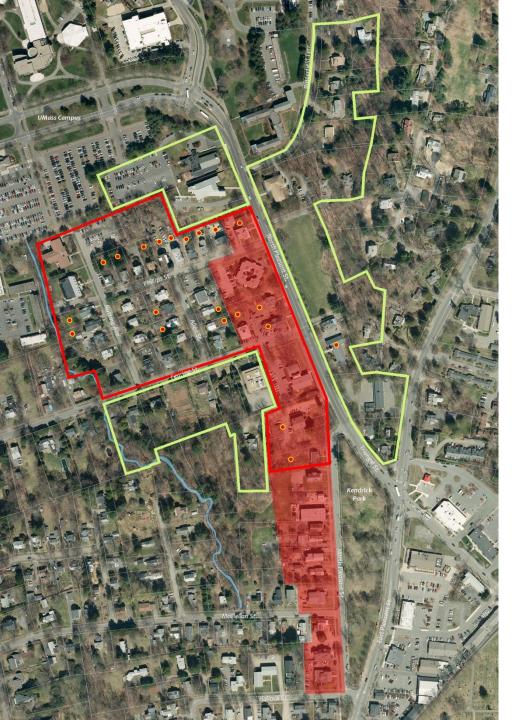


Yes



No

Parcels with a red dot are those exhibiting decadent conditions as defined in ch. 121B.



Possible Alternative 1

Red shaded area is potential Urban Renewal Area

Legend

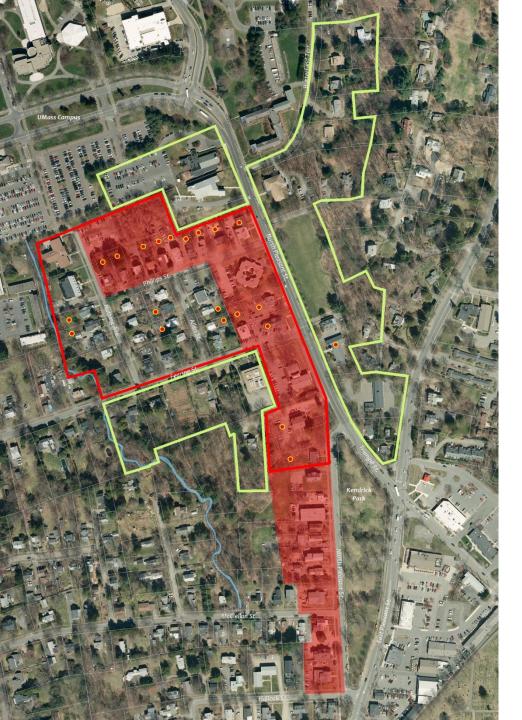
URA Eligibility



Yes



No



Possible Alternative 2

Red shaded area is potential Urban **Renewal Area**

Legend

URA Eligibility





Conclusions

- ☐ A portion of the study area is clearly NOT eligible for designation as an Urban Renewal Area.
- ☐ A portion of it IS eligible, based on this preliminary assessment of whether properties exhibit any of the characteristics listed in the definition of "decadent" in the state law.
- □ Nothing in the study area is blighted, in fact in my opinion the case for designation is weak without further supportive data.

Recommendations

- Should the Amherst Redevelopment Authority choose to pursue use of this tool, next steps are:
 - ☐ Hire consultant to perform detailed analysis of the area, including south by Kendrick Park; and
 - ☐ Submit to DHCD for review.
 - □Then, if DHCD approves the designation of the area, hire a consultant to help prepare the Urban Renewal Plan which will take the vision and zoning amendments one step further with more specifics for desired redevelopment.

Urban Renewal Plan

Criteria for approval:

- Private enterprise alone will not result in redevelopment.
- The project will enhance/promote private investment.
- The financing plan is sound.
- The area is decadent, blighted, or substandard.
- The Urban Renewal Plan is complete.
- The relocation plan is approved under MGL c 79A.

Final Words

- Preliminary this was the "first blush".
- Weak while it appears some of the area is eligible for URA designation, it is not a strong case.
- Tool Urban Renewal is only one of several tools that can be used to provide the regulatory and economic climate needed to induce redevelopment in the area.

Where Do We Go From Here?

Additional Recommendations

Conduct "potential" residential market analysis

Create a form-based zoning code overlay for the redevelopment areas included in this plan, which restricts the number of unrelated occupants

Additional Recommendations

Study the vehicular and pedestrian traffic impacts of new development on the neighborhoods west of the Planning area

Conduct a development cost benefits analysis based on the proposed plan

How does this plan make the Town better?

Provides the infill opportunities described by the Master Plan

Strengthens the Town/University relation both physically and operationally

How does this plan make the neighborhoods better?

Attracts a different and more adult population to the area

Has the potential, overtime, of displacing sources of nuisance, noise, and problems

Diffuses the vehicular and pedestrian traffic impacts

How does this plan make the neighborhoods better?

Provides neighborhood services, housing choices, employment opportunities all within walking distance

Recommends stronger emphasis on code enforcement

Creates a better place





